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INFO RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 1557  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 2199

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 002048

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STATE FOR EAP/MLS, IO/UNP; USUN FOR JOAN PLAISTED

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/17/2016  
TAGS: PREL PHUM UNGA CB  
SUBJECT: CAMBODIAN MFA OFFICIAL ON HR RESOLUTIONS

REF: A. A) STATE 187018  
1B. B) PLAISTED 11/14 EMAIL

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Margaret McLean; Reason 1.4 (b) (d)

11. (C) On November 16, P/E Chief met with Sun Suon, Director of the MFA's International Organizations Department that handles UN affairs, to provide demarche points concerning the proposed Belarus resolutions (reftel a). Suon noted that normal practice is for the Cambodian Permrep in New York to pass copies of "sensitive" resolutions to Phnom Penh for guidance and instructions. Suon then forwards the resolutions to FM Hor Namhong for a decision along with a recommendation. Suon added that he had earlier received the draft human rights resolutions on Burma and North Korea from Cambodian Permrep Chem Widya. The others, he noted, had not been provided to him and therefore the expectation is that they will be handled as in past years. Likewise, Suon had not seen anything proposed by Belarus, and thought it unlikely Cambodia would support them. He anticipated Chem Widya would be absent from any vote; P/E Chief noted that the USG would appreciate Cambodia voting against the three Belarus resolutions aimed at the United States.

12. (C) On Burma, he said that Cambodia would join with other ASEAN states and vote yes to any no action motion. If the resolution comes to a vote, however (and he thought it likely to happen), Cambodia will vote against the resolution. Suon said he recommended that Cambodia abstain or be absent from the vote, but the FM decided that Cambodia would vote no to the resolution. (Note: Suon's remarks track with comments by Cambodian Permrep to USUN outlined in ref b. End Note.) If the resolution goes to a vote, Suon predicted ASEAN would split. He suggested that Singapore and the Philippines would likely vote yes, he was not certain how Thailand or Indonesia would vote, and the rest of ASEAN -- including Cambodia -- would vote no. Burma's military, he said, was dangerous, unpredictable, and well trained; Cambodia believes it preferable to engage, rather than isolate them. P/E Chief pointed out that the PM has been more critical of Burma over the past year, and had offered to be more supportive of isolating Burma within ASEAN. Sun Suon responded that the PM's position on such issues (i.e., an ASEAN neighbor) is not firm.

13. (C) On the North Korea resolution, Suon mentioned that the North Korean Ambassador had demarshaled him on the resolution. Suon reportedly explained that Cambodia remains concerned over the situation in North Korea, and cannot vote against the resolution -- a likelier course of action would be to abstain or not be present for the vote. Suon said that the North Korean Ambassador indicated he understood Cambodia's position and did not press further.

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